

# Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries

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The fate of classical monuments in late Antiquity has been studied against the background of hostility between Christians and pagans in the context of the Christianization of the Roman Empire. The disappearance of classical monuments has generally been viewed as a manifestation of the triumph of the Christian religion. Their destruction has been regarded as a result of deliberate attacks of the Christianized state, of fanatical bishops, monks, and common folk—those groups that had rejected the pagan cultural tradition.

In this paper I shall attempt to show that in late Antiquity Christians also had a positive attitude toward pagan monuments and transmitted this attitude to the Byzantium of later centuries. Hostility toward pagan monuments was far from being a general phenomenon, an officially adopted policy of the Christian state or of the Church. In many instances classical monuments fell into decay merely because they had been abandoned, whereas in other instances they were actually preserved, either because they had been transformed for Christian use or because of their artistic value. This assessment can be explained only if the subject is reexamined in the broader context of the cultural realities of late Antiquity. Conclusions from recent studies based on either archaeological evidence or literary sources will represent the starting point of this investigation. The nature of the available material and the evolution of Christianity within the Roman state impose a diachronic approach to the subject. One should also bear in mind that various local political and cultural forces produced divergent attitudes toward classical monuments.

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## I

I shall first review the hostility of Christians toward pagan monuments on the basis of current bibliography and then examine what I shall call the “positive” attitude of the Christians. The historical evidence suggests that the peak of hostile actions against pagan monuments does not coincide with the “victory” of the Church at the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>1</sup> Most of the attacks against them, on the part of the state as well as of the Church, are attested for the end of the fourth century and coincide with the oppressive measures taken by Theodosius I. It would seem that the Church merely responded to an initiative of the state.<sup>2</sup> It has also been suggested that the Church had grown more confident because of internal reasons: it was not distracted by internal fights,

<sup>1</sup>St. Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum*, 1.16 (CSEL 43, p. 22), referring to the middle of the 3rd century, mentions that already at that time Christians would have liked to see the destruction of all expressions of paganism (“eversio templorum et damnatio sacrificiorum et confractio simulacrorum”). On the attitudes of the early Christians toward pagan monuments, see T. C. G. Thornton, “The Destruction of Idols—Sinful or Meritorious?” *JTS*, n.s. 37 (1986), 121–24. For a general account of the attacks against pagan monuments and their transformation into Christian churches, see F. W. Deichmann, “Christianisierung II (der Monamente),” *RAC* 2 (1954), cols. 1228–41; idem, “Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern,” *JDAI* 54 (1939), 105–36.

<sup>2</sup>The attacks were started by Cynegius, praetorian prefect of Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 384–388). He destroyed temples and idols in the East and in Egypt; see R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven–London, 1984), 98; G. Fowden, “Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire, A.D. 320–435,” *JTS* 29.1 (1978), 62–64. Libanius presents his actions as a result of the influence of his wife, who followed the advice of fanatical monks. But in a carefully formulated passage we discern the political reality that dictated his actions, namely, a law of May 385 (*CTh*, XVI.10.9): Libanius, *Or. 30.3*, 48 f. Cf. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 98 note 34. Fowden, p. 77, also suggests that the Church was encouraged by imperial measures; the interference of the Church can also be explained by the incompetence of the decurions who were responsible for enforcing the law: *ibid.*, p. 55.

and bishops had established control over their flocks.<sup>3</sup>

The attitude of the state toward pagan monuments is related on the one hand to imperial religious policy, on the other hand to the cultural and social realities of the time. It has often been stated that the Christianization of the empire was a slow process. The emperors tried carefully to integrate Christians into the empire.<sup>4</sup> The upper class, with its strong pagan character, could not be neglected.<sup>5</sup> Imperial ceremony and symbolism remained predominantly pagan for some time.<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that maintaining a pagan aspect helped to secure social order and presented better opportunities for conversion.<sup>7</sup> Paganism still constituted a social and cultural force. Despite all the differences that separated the two groups, the interaction between them was extremely important. In recent years scholars have tended to emphasize the physical coexistence of pagans and Christians and the mutual influences of the two cultures more strongly than their conflicts and differences.<sup>8</sup> It is

in this context that we must examine the attitudes of the state and the Church toward pagan monuments.

Anti-pagan legislation began in the reign of Constantine.<sup>9</sup> Restrictions on pagan worship became progressively more serious. In the beginning, imperial decrees were concerned with superstition, divination, and magic in connection with pagan ritual.<sup>10</sup> It is generally accepted that superstition was widespread in late Antiquity.<sup>11</sup> The term *supersticio* designated foreign cults and religious beliefs among the lower classes, while in Christian writings it was generally used to indicate paganism.<sup>12</sup>

Other measures against paganism included closing the temples, confiscating their property, and forbidding sacrifices and the worship of idols.<sup>13</sup> Destruction of temples is not found in the early decrees. Isolated incidents are mentioned in other sources: for example, Constantine ordered the destruction of the temple at Mamre and the erection of a church on the site.<sup>14</sup> A decree of the year 346

<sup>3</sup> MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 97.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. idem, "The Meaning of A.D. 312: The Difficulty of Converting the Empire," *17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers* (New York, 1986), 1–15.

<sup>5</sup> R. von Haehling, *Die Religionszugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des römischen Reiches seit Constantins I. Alleinherrschaft* (Bonn, 1978), passim; D. M. Novak, "Constantine and the Senate: An Early Phase of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy," *Ancient Society* 10 (1979), 271–310; G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1984), 291 f. For a different view, cf. T. D. Barnes, "Christians and Pagans in the Reign of Constantius," in *L'Église et l'empire au IVe siècle* (Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 1989), 312–21.

<sup>6</sup> S. G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981); for the Christian elements of imperial symbolism, see S. Calderone, "Teología política, sucesión dinástica e consecración en età constantiniana," in *Le culte des souverains dans l'empire romain* (Geneva, 1972), 246 f.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 109 f, 135–36.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 40, 78. On the physical coexistence of pagans and Christians, see C. Guignebert, "Les demi-chrétiens et leur place dans l'Église antique," *RHR* 88 (1923), 65–102; W. Daut, "Die 'halben Christen' unter den Konvertiten," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 55 (1971), 171–88; G. Bonner, "The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian," *JEH* 35.3 (1984), 348 ff. On pagan elements in religious practice and everyday life, see MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 74–85. On the interaction between pagan and Christian thought, literature, and art, see E. von Ivánka, *Hellenisches und Christliches im frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben* (Vienna, 1948); B. R. Rees, "Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt, II. The transition to Christianity," *JEA* 36 (1950), 86–100; W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); H. Chadwick, *Early Christianity and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1960); Averil Cameron, "New and Old in Christian Literature," *17th International Byzantine Congress*, 45–58, esp. 48; and J. Engemann, "Christianization of Late Antique Art," *ibid.*, 83–105. For a general account, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1984), 554 f.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. T. D. Barnes, "Constantine's Prohibition of Pagan Sacrifice," *AJP* 105 (1984), 69–72; idem, "Christians," 322 f.

<sup>10</sup> *CTh*, IX.16.1–12 (a. 319–409); XVI.10.3 (a. 342), 9 (a. 385), 10 (a. 391), 12.1 (a. 392), 16 (a. 399), 17 (a. 399). See also R. Rémond, *La crise de l'empire romain de Marc Aurèle à Anastase*, *Nouvelle Clio* 11 (Paris, 1970), 159–60; MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 96–97.

<sup>11</sup> A. Barb, "The Survival of Magic Arts," in A. D. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (London, 1962), 100–125; A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, II (Oxford, 1964) (hereafter *LRE*), 957–64; R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, 1966), 100–108; idem, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1981), 70 f; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), 119–39; for a different view, cf. P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972), 122 f.

<sup>12</sup> A. Momigliano, "Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians," *Studies in Church History* 8, *Popular Belief and Practice: Papers Read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. G. J. Cumming and D. Baker (Cambridge, 1972), 5 f. For a similar view, see also Jones, *LRE*, 962. Bonner, "Paganism," 346, suggests that the use of the imprecise term *supersticio* in the imperial legislation was intentional.

<sup>13</sup> Forbidding sacrifices: *CTh*, XVI.10.2 (a. 341), 4 (a. 346), 5 (a. 353), 6 (a. 356), 7 (a. 381), 9 (a. 385), 11 (a. 391); cf. J. Gau-demet, "La condamnation des pratiques païennes en 391," in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou* [Paris, 1972], 597–602, 12 (a. 392), 13 (a. 395), 17 (a. 399), 18 (a. 399), 25 (a. 435); closing the temples: XVI.10.4 (a. 346), 16 (a. 399); forbidding the worship of idols: XVI.10.6 (a. 356), 10 (a. 391); confiscating property of the temples: XVI.10.12.2 (a. 392), XVI.10.20.1–2 (a. 415); destroying idols: XVI.10.19.1 (a. 408).

<sup>14</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III.51–53. Only six pagan sites are attested as having been attacked by Christians at the time of Constantine. In all these cases, extremely important reasons

explicitly mentions temples: those situated outside the city walls are to be preserved because of their connection with public entertainment, which had been established by long tradition.<sup>15</sup> Some scholars saw practical considerations in the policy of the Christian emperors: the temples had to be maintained because they were centers for commerce, social activities, and political meetings.<sup>16</sup>

The most important attacks against pagan temples are those by Cynegius, the destruction of the temples of Gaza by another imperial officer, and that of the Serapeum in Alexandria, destroyed after the clashes in 391 between Christians and pagans.<sup>17</sup> It is only in 398 and 399 that imperial legislation treats the “problem” of pagan temples in a different manner: the temples in the country had to be demolished without disturbing the peace; the masonry could be used for other construction.<sup>18</sup> In 407 imperial decrees ordered that idols be torn down, while the temples in the cities and in the countryside were to be designated for public use.<sup>19</sup> It is important for our investigation to stress the conclusion of several recent studies: a systematic destruction of pagan sanctuaries was never the intention of imperial policy.<sup>20</sup>

The attacks of the Church against the temples follow the same pattern. Destruction of pagan sanctuaries was not the result of an organized effort of the Church. It was occasional, and the work of local bishops,<sup>21</sup> mostly in the East and in Africa. Notorious are the cases of Bishop Marcellus in Apamea (in 391 or 392) and of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>22</sup> It is certain that bishops had not been officially granted authority to destroy pagan sanctuaries. The first and only decree that authorizes bishops to interfere is that of the year 407/

had dictated these actions: R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York, 1987), 671–72.

<sup>15</sup> *CTh*, XVI.10.3.

<sup>16</sup> MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 96–97.

<sup>17</sup> On the destruction of the temples of Gaza, see H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener, *Marc le Diacre, Vie de Porphyre* (Paris, 1930), § 63–66. See also Fowden, “Bishops,” 73; MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 89. On the destruction of the Serapeum, see N. Q. King, *The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity* (London, 1961), 78–82; Fowden, “Bishops,” 69–70.

<sup>18</sup> *CTh*, XVI.10.16 (a. 399); XV.1.36 (a. 397).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI.10.19.1–2 (a. 407).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. King, *Theodosius*, 71 f; W. E. Kaegi, “The Fifth-Century Twilight of Byzantine Paganism,” *ClMed* 27 (1966), 243–75, esp. 271 f; D. J. Constantelos, “Paganism and the State in the Age of Justinian,” *CHR* 50 (1964–65), 372–80, esp. 378–80.

<sup>21</sup> For a general account, see Fowden, “Bishops.”

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 64 f; MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 98–99. See also A. Favale, *Teofilo d’Alessandria (345–c.412): Scritti, vita e dottrina* (Turin, 1958).

8, which refers to the prohibition of convivia.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, bishops, especially in the East and in Africa, often used the religious zeal of monks as a means of destroying temples.<sup>24</sup> We also hear of the destruction of pagan shrines by newly converted Christians. The sources present such actions as a manifestation of their adherence to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Destroying the places of worship was also used as an alternative method of conversion when peaceful means of persuasion (preaching, miracles, etc.) or social factors (rewards, etc.) seemed insufficient.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, several sources suggest that most of the temples were gradually decaying, not because of Christian attacks, but because they had already been abandoned. We hear of abandoned temples in an early period, before the triumph of Christianity. Pliny, in his *Epistulae*, X.96.10, insists that oppressive measures against the Christians would bring worshipers back to sanctuaries: “Certe satis constat prope iam desolata templo coepisse celebrari, et sacra sollemnia diu intermissa repeti passimque venire carmen victimarum, cuius adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur.” The fourth-century description of the temple of Mithra in Alexandria by Socrates is revealing: the site was ἐκ παλαιῶν τῶν χρόνων ἔρημος καὶ ἡμελημένος. Emperor Constantius donated the sanctuary ὡς σχολαῖον to the Church of Alexandria.<sup>27</sup>

First the temples were stripped of their treasures, then they became dilapidated.<sup>28</sup> The impression that we gain from the literary sources is confirmed by the archaeological evidence. Jean-Michel Spieser, in a survey of archaeological reports on sanctuaries in Greece, concluded: (1) Christians destroyed very few pagan temples in Greece (he does not count sanctuaries destroyed at a later date, since such destructions were not carried out with a hostile intent);<sup>29</sup> (2) in a few cases

<sup>23</sup> *CTh*, XVI.10.19.3; cf. Fowden, “Bishops,” 53.

<sup>24</sup> For example, in A.D. 399 John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, sent monks against the temples of Phoenicia: Theodoret, *HE*, V.29; John Chrysostom, PG 52, cols. 676–78, 685–87. Cf. also Libanius, *Pro templis*, 8. See also W. H. C. Frend, “The Winning of the Countryside,” *JEH* 18 (1967), 7–8; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch, City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), 237.

<sup>25</sup> Theodoret, *Historia religiosa*, 26.

<sup>26</sup> MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 99–101.

<sup>27</sup> Socrates, *HE*, III.2. Cf. also Libanius, *Or. XVIII.23*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., for example, the case of the sanctuary of Asclepius at Aegae in Cilicia, the columns of which had been removed by Christians: Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum*, XIII.12.30–34.

<sup>29</sup> Among the few exceptions is the basilica of Paleopolis in Corfu (5th or even 6th century). In the inscription of consecration it is mentioned that the bishop Jovianus had destroyed pa-

in which temples were destroyed for religious aims, the sites of destroyed temples were avoided and Christians did not build churches on them (there is only one exception, the basilica of Palaeopolis in Corfu); and (3) with very few exceptions, churches were built on temple sites later, at a time when this could no longer have any anti-pagan significance.<sup>30</sup>

## II

In investigating the cases in which Christians incorporated pagan monuments in their culture, I shall combine evidence from a variety of sources that have not been studied in this context. I shall limit myself to those that illustrate best the various aspects of the problem in its complexity.

First, it must be emphasized that classical monuments never ceased to be appreciated for their artistic value, especially by the educated classes. The Christian emperors decorated their capital with pagan statues from various cities of the empire. Cyril Mango, in a study of the significance of ancient statuary in Byzantine civilization, expresses his surprise at the collection of pagan statues by Christian emperors and remarks that it "constitutes something of a paradox."<sup>31</sup> He suggests that the explanation lies in the ambiguous religious policy of the first Christian emperors. Christian thinkers developed an artificial explanation: according to Eusebius, pagan statues thus exposed were subject to public ridicule.<sup>32</sup> Despite this statement, certainly dictated by one-sided Christian attitudes, Eusebius does not conceal what apparently was in everyone's mind, that is, the artistic value of these monuments: ἐπληρούτο δὲ διόλου πᾶσα ἡ βασιλέως ἐπώνυμος πόλις τῶν κατὰ πᾶν ἔθνος ἐντέχνοις χαλκοῦ φιλοκαλίαις ἀφιερωμένων.

gan temples and replaced them with a church: J. Papadimitriou, 'Ο 'Ιοβιανὸς τῆς βασιλικῆς τῆς Παλαιοπόλεως Κερκύρας, 'Αρχ.'Εφ. (1942–44), suppl., 39–48.

<sup>30</sup>J.-M. Spieser, "La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce," *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern, Symposium in Olympia 10.–12. Oktober 1974*, Anläßlich der Hundertjahrfeier der Abteilung Athen, ed. Ulf Jantzen (Tübingen, 1976), 309–20. Cf. also J. Geffcken, *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, trans. S. MacCormack (Amsterdam, 1978), 228. Regarding the destruction of the temple of Asclepius at Athens and the erection of a Christian church, see A. Frantz, "From Paganism to Christianity in the Temples of Athens," *DOP* 19 (1965), 194–96. For a different view, cf. T. E. Gregory, "The Christian Asklepieion in Athens," *BSCAbstr* 9 (1983), 39–40. The temple was abandoned by ca. 485 and shortly afterward a church was built on the site.

<sup>31</sup>C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *DOP* 17 (1963), 55–75.

<sup>32</sup>*Vita Constantini*, III.54.

John Chrysostom, later in the same century, offers another "Christian" explanation why the pagan statue of the sanctuary at Daphne in Antioch had not been destroyed earlier by the Christian emperor: he wanted to demonstrate that only a victory won against an enemy when he is powerful and glorious is worthwhile.<sup>33</sup> Socrates, in a similar way, tries to explain why Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria ordered the erection of one of the pagan statues in a public place, when he had commanded that all others be destroyed: in this way the Hellenes would not deny that they had worshiped such gods in the past; it would also cause the pagan religion to be derided (ἐπὶ γέλωτι τῆς Ἑλλήνων θρησκείας).<sup>34</sup> Theodoret, in his *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, states that pagans tried to hide pagan cult objects, while Christians exposed them in the agoras so that women and children would laugh (χωμῷδεῖσθαι) at the so-called gods.<sup>35</sup>

I should note here that a series of imperial decrees suggests that collecting statues from various monuments was a more general phenomenon in the fourth century, and it was limited neither to Christians nor to the capital. The first constitution dates from the year 365 (*CTh*, XV.1.14). It makes clear that collecting was frequently practiced in the provinces: the provincial governors were transferring statues, slabs of marble, or columns (*transferendorum signorum vel marmororum vel columnarum materiam*) from smaller cities to the big cities (*metropoles vel splendidissimas civitates*) in order to decorate them (*ornare*).<sup>36</sup> A series of laws concerning the violation of sepulchers supplements these points. In a decree of the year 357, penalties were inflicted upon those who "should remove from a tomb either stones, marble, columns, or any other materials to be used for building purposes, or should do so with the intention of selling them."<sup>37</sup> From a decree of the year 363, we learn that people removed "the ornaments of tombs for the purpose of decorating banqueting halls or porticoes"<sup>38</sup>

The circumstances of this phenomenon cannot be easily discerned. It is a generally held view that there was a shortage of materials and qualified artists in the fourth century A.D. as a consequence of

<sup>33</sup>PG 50, col. 561; cf. also col. 572.

<sup>34</sup>Socrates, *HE*, V.16.

<sup>35</sup>Theodoret, *HE*, X.58.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. also *CTh*, XV.1.19 (a. 376), 37(a. 398); Nov. Maj. IV in *CTh*, vol. 2 (a. 458); *CI*, 8.10.2 (a. 222), 7 (a. 363), and the restriction of Constantine regarding private houses 6 (a. 321).

<sup>37</sup>*CTh*, IX.17.4 = *CI*, IX.19.4: "Si quis igitur de sepulchro abstulerit saxa vel marmora vel columnas aliamve quamcumque materiam, fabricandi gratia sive id fecerit venditurus."

<sup>38</sup>*CTh*, IX.17.5 = *CI*, IX.19.5: "sed et ornamenta quaedam tricliniis aut porticibus auferri de sepulchris."

the economic crisis of the third century.<sup>39</sup> This view is based on indirect information from a decree of Constantine by which artists and other specialized professionals were exempted from public services.<sup>40</sup> It would appear that lack of artists is not sufficiently documented in the sources and that the breakup of public buildings can be explained differently. The phenomenon might be related to patronage and city finances: according to imperial legislation, the patrons of public works were mainly provincial governors who were interested in decorating their provincial capitals with ready-made material from cities. On the other hand, because of the decline of the decurions, the municipal administration lacked interest in protecting public buildings in the smaller cities.<sup>41</sup> The diminishing importance of public space in late Antiquity could also explain the breakup of urban public buildings. Various sources testify to an invasion of urban public space by private individuals: houses were built in formerly public areas, porticoes were closed by the erection of modest temporary or permanent dwellings, and so forth. Economic, administrative, and cultural changes have been suggested to explain this tendency.<sup>42</sup> It may well be that the emergence and development of Christian art in the third and fourth centuries affected the production of non-Christian art, and that the phenomenon we have observed could also be explained as a natural reaction toward appropriating objects of art that already belonged to the past. It is certain that the texts do not connect the phenomenon with any hostile actions of Christians against pagans. Therefore, in the light of evidence from other sources, which testify to the appreciation of the artistic value of the pagan monuments by Christians, the phenomenon takes on a special significance.

Emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, for example, in a *constitutio* of the year 382, ordered that a certain temple at Osrhoene in Mes-

<sup>39</sup> Jones, *LRE*, 862–63; idem, *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History* (Oxford, 1974), 107.

<sup>40</sup> *CTh*, XIII.IV.1 (a. 334), 2 (a. 337).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Jones, *LRE*, 737 f, esp. 757–63; Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 167 f; D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1969), 108–14.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "The Demise of the Ancient Greek City and the Emergence of the Mediaeval City in the Eastern Roman Empire," *Classical Views* 32, n.s. 7 (1988), 385–87; A. Kazhdan and A. Cutler, "Continuity and Discontinuity in Byzantine History," *Byzantium* 52 (1982), 460, 463–64. On the transformation of the open space of ancient houses, see S. P. Ellis, "The End of the Roman House," *AJA* 92 (1988), 565–76; Y. Thébert in *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. P. Veyne (Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1987), 353 ff, esp. 391–92.

opotamia be kept open so that the public could enjoy the aesthetic value of the statues displayed there:

By the authority of the public council We decree that the temple shall continually be open that was formerly dedicated to the assemblage of throngs of people and now also is for the common use of the people, and in which images are reported to have been placed which must be measured by the value of their art rather than by their divinity; We do not permit any divine imperial response that was surreptitiously obtained to prejudge this situation. In order that this temple may be seen by the assemblages of the city and by frequent crowds, Your Experience shall preserve all celebrations of festivities, and by the authority of Our divine imperial response, you shall permit the temple to be open, but in such a way that the performance of sacrifices forbidden therein may not be supposed to be permitted under the pretext of such access to the temple.<sup>43</sup>

In a *constitutio* of the year 399, Emperors Arcadius and Theodosius decreed that the ornaments of public works (*publicorum operum ornamenta servari*) be preserved. "If any person should attempt to destroy such works, he shall not have the right to flatter himself as relying on any authority, if perchance he should produce any rescript or any law at his defense. Such documents shall be torn from his hands and referred to Our Wisdom."<sup>44</sup> Another decree of the same emperors forbade the destruction of "temples which are empty of illicit things" ("Aedes inlicitis rebus vacuas nostrarum beneficio sanctionum ne quis conetur evertere"). But if sacrifices are still conducted there, then the idols must be taken down.<sup>45</sup> A similar attitude to pagan temples and statues is attested as late as the sixth century. Justinian ordered Narses to destroy pagan temples in Egypt and to send the statues to Constantinople.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps the most famous collection of ancient statues in Constantinople was that of the baths of Zeuxippus. The nature of these statues, different from those that traditionally decorated ancient baths, suggests that the intention of the collectors was to display objects of art.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *CTh*, XVI.10.8: "Aedem olim frequentiae dedicatam coetu et iam populo quoque communem, in qua simulacra feruntur posita artis pretio quam divinitate metienda iugiter patere publici consilii auctoritate decernimus neque huic rei obreptivum officere sinimus oraculum. Ut conventu urbis et frequenti coetu videatur, experientia tua omni votorum celebritate servata auctoritate nostri ita patere templum permittat oraculi, ne illic prohibitorum usus sacrificiorum huius occasione aditus permissus esse credatur" (trans. C. Pharr, Princeton, 1969).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI.10.15.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI.10.18 (a. 399).

<sup>46</sup> Procopius, *Pers.*, I.19.37.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. S. Bassett Clucas, "Statuary in the Baths of Zeuxippus," *BSCAbstr* 14 (1988), 39. For the collection of statues at the Hippodrome, cf. *ibid.*, 9 (1983), 34–35.

It is striking that even ecclesiastics took a similar view. The fifty-eighth canon of the fifth council of Carthage (A.D. 401) urges the emperors to order that the idols of Africa be destroyed; the temples that are in the fields and in other remote places must also be destroyed, but only if they had been left without embellishments.<sup>48</sup> The modern reader is surprised at the attitude of this official ecclesiastical text. A Byzantine scholiast of the twelfth century, Zonaras, was obviously overwhelmed. He therefore invents an artificial interpretation of the canon mentioned above: “the canon does not imply that the temples with adornments had to be preserved.”<sup>49</sup>

Julian, in *Epistula* 79, refers to Pegasus, the bishop of Ilion, who maintained the pagan temples of his city. He destroyed only a few building blocks in order not to arouse suspicion and to be able to save the rest (πέφηνε γάρ ούδαμοι τῶν ιερῶν ἡδικηώς πλὴν ὀλίγων παντάπαιοι λίθων ἐκ καταλύματος, ἵνα αὐτῷ, σώζειν ἔξη τὰ λοιπά). A *constitutio* of the year 365 issued by Valentinian and Valens suggests that in several cases Christians were actively involved in preserving pagan temples.<sup>50</sup> Other Christian sources explicitly mention the beauty of pagan monuments.<sup>51</sup>

Pagans, of course, regarded pagan monuments in much the same way. For example, in his *Pro templis* Libanius speaks about the beauty of a statue of Asclepius in the city of Beroea, destroyed by Christians, and he remarks that by destroying it, the Christians had deprived the city of its adornment (ἀποκοσμοῦντες τὴν πόλιν).<sup>52</sup> In his *Antiochikos* he claims that “the palaces of gods are adornment

<sup>48</sup> Mansi, III, col. 766: “Instant etiam aliae necessitates religiosis imperatoribus postulandae, ut reliquias idolorum per omnem Africam jubeant penitus amputari: nam plerisque in locis maritimis, atque possessionibus diversis, adhuc erroris istius iniquitas viget: ut praecipiantur et ipsas deleri, et tempa eorum, quae in agris, vel in locis abditis constituta nullo ornamento sunt, jubeantur omnimodo destruiri” (Canons 57–65 were from the 5th council of Carthage in 401; cf. Hefele, II, p. 125 ff, 205–6).

<sup>49</sup> G. A. Rhallis and M. Potlis, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θεῶν καὶ ιερῶν κανόνων*, III (Athens, 1853), 462: τοῦτο δὲ εἴπεν οὐχὶ διαστέλλουσα, ὡστε τοὺς μὲν χωρὶς εὐκοσμίας ὄντας καθαιρεθῆναι, τοὺς δὲ κόσμον ἔτι ἔχοντας περισώζεσθαι, ὀλλὰ δεικνύουσα, ὅτι ἡδὲν ἡδεῖσθαι καθαιρεῖσθαι, ὀφαιρεθέντες δὲ περιέκεντο κόσμον, καὶ οἶον ἡμικατάλυτοι γεγονότες.

<sup>50</sup> *CTh*, XVI.1.1: “Quisquis seu iudex seu apparitor ad custodiā templorum homines Christianae religionis adposuerit sciāt non saluti suae, non fortunis esse parcendum.”

<sup>51</sup> Cf., for example, about the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, Theodoret, *HE*, V.22: μέγιστος τε οὗτος καὶ κάλλιστος and Sozomen, *HE*, VII.15: ναὸς δὲ οὗτος ἦν κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει ἐμφανέστατος.

<sup>52</sup> *Or. XXX.22.*

and protection to the city.”<sup>53</sup> Eusebius expresses a similar idea using a similar vocabulary: τέμενος, οὐκ ἐν μέσαις πόλεσιν οὐδ' ἐν ἀγοραῖς καὶ πλατείαις, ὅποια τὰ πολλὰ κόσμου χάριν ταῖς πόλεσιν φιλοτιμεῖται.<sup>54</sup> In the year 359 the temple of Fortuna in Antioch was deprived of “its beauties” (μετὰ τῆς ἄλλης αἰγλῆς).<sup>55</sup> In the fifth century Eunapius, in his *Vitae sophistarum*, cites the prophecy of an Egyptian seer regarding the destruction of the Serapeum: “after his death the temple would cease to be, and even the great and holy temples of Serapis would pass into formless darkness and be transformed, and that a fabulous and unseemly gloom would hold sway over the fairest things on earth. To all these prophecies time bore witness, and in the end his prediction gained the force of an oracle.”<sup>56</sup>

Apart from these testimonials to the artistic significance of the classical monuments for Christians, other sources, mainly archaeological and hagiographical ones, reveal a more complex picture, namely, the re-use of pagan monuments by Christians. We should distinguish between the use of building materials of temples for churches and the establishment of churches on the sites of pagan sanctuaries. With reference to the first case, two explanations have been suggested.

(1) Slabs of marble from temples provided ready-made building materials for other structures. Convenience and financial motives could easily explain their use. Libanius, in his *Funeral Oration over Julian*, mentions that already at that time people were using stones of abandoned temples for building their houses.<sup>57</sup> The *constitutio* of the year 397 ordered that building materials of temples be used for construction of public buildings (roads, bridges, aqueducts, city walls, etc.).<sup>58</sup> Archaeologists are often struck by the fact that ancient stones are incorporated into churches without any attempt to produce a symmetrical whole. Such asymmetrical arrangements suggest indifference toward the principles of classical aesthetics and architecture. The obvious conclusion is that Christian architects no longer appreciated the artistic value of the classical monuments. This conclusion of course leads to the suggestion that only

<sup>53</sup> *Or. XI.125*: κόσμος τε τῇ πόλει καὶ φυλακῇ, τῶν θεῶν τὰ ἀνάκτορα.

<sup>54</sup> *Vita Constantini*, III.55.

<sup>55</sup> Libanius, *Ep. 88.2*. Cf. also Julian, *Ep. 60*, 379b (τὸν ἐν ιεροῖς κόσμον).

<sup>56</sup> Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, VI.9.17 (trans. Loeb).

<sup>57</sup> *Or. XVIII.126.*

<sup>58</sup> *CTh*, XV.1.36.

financial reasons dictated the use of ancient slabs of marble. It also implies that early Christian artists and those to whom they addressed their work were indifferent to the aesthetic effects of such architectural arrangements. It has also been suggested that the re-use of classical slabs of marble shows “the qualities of dematerialized formal design that represent the spiritual ideals of the new religion.”<sup>59</sup> Perhaps another interpretation ought to be considered: the sculptural decoration of Byzantine churches is asymmetrical as a rule and the haphazard insertion of ancient stones in churches might have helped in producing this effect. Descriptions of Byzantine churches praise the ποικιλία as a basic characteristic of their decoration.<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that later Byzantine sources express admiration at the re-use of building materials, especially columns from other monuments: Constantine the Rhodian wrote an *enkomion* of the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople in which he praises the variety of the columns transported there from other places:

Τοὺς κιόνας δὲ τοὺς ξένους καὶ τὴν φύσιν  
καὶ τὴν χρόαν πέλοντας, οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι  
πόθεν τὲ καὶ πῶς κάκ τίνος πάτρας γένος  
φέροντες ἥλθον εἰς Ἀποστόλων δόμον,  
οὓς ἀλλόφυλος ἀλλοδαπή τις φύσις  
ἡνεγκε πέτρας ἐκφύλου τὲ καὶ ξένης.<sup>61</sup>

(2) Cyril Mango puts forward other interpretations based on observations of the use of ancient blocks of marble in later Byzantine churches: since the ancient stones were placed in highly conspicuous places in the churches, they were given a Christian reinterpretation, or apotropaic power was attributed to them.<sup>62</sup> The literary sources, unfortunately, do not provide evidence that could explain this phenomenon with certainty.

The erection of churches on sites of pagan sanctuaries is an even more complex subject. Some literary sources testify to an early Christian founding of churches on such sites. Constantine set a prece-

<sup>59</sup>Cf. the remarks of R. L. Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture in the Central Area of Corinth*, Corinth 16, (Princeton, 1957), 26 note 73. It is important to note that the re-use of ancient building materials is no longer viewed by archaeologists as an indication of decline: N. Duval, “Etudes sur l’architecture chrétienne nord-africaine,” *Mémoires de l’Institut de France* 84, Antiquité (1972), 1071–72.

<sup>60</sup>Διήγησις περὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς . . . τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας, ed. E. Vitti, *Die Erzählung über den Bau der Hagia Sophia in Konstantinopel. Kritische Edition mehrerer Versionen* (Amsterdam, 1986), pp. 454, line 9 and 462, line 8.

<sup>61</sup>E. Legrand, “Description des œuvres d’art et de l’église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople: Poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien,” *REG* 9 (1896), p. 56, verses 686–91.

<sup>62</sup>Mango, “Statuary,” 63–64.

dent when he ordered the destruction of the temple at Mamre and replaced it with a church.<sup>63</sup> However, there is no evidence that for Constantinople he favored a systematic transformation of temples into churches.<sup>64</sup> In Alexandria George, the bishop who succeeded Athanasius, was given permission to transform the temple of Mithra into a church.<sup>65</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus transformed a temple into a church in his bishopric.<sup>66</sup> According to literary evidence, the oracle of Sarpedon Apollo in Seleucia was converted into a Christian church in the first half of the fourth century.<sup>67</sup> Sozomen states that Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria intended to transform a temple of Dionysus into a church,<sup>68</sup> while the Serapeum, stripped of its statues, was transformed into a church.<sup>69</sup> At Gaza a church was built on the site of the Marneion after its destruction.

The Life of St. Porphyry by Mark the Deacon offers an interesting description of how Christians felt about the erection of churches on sites of pagan sanctuaries. After the destruction of the statues and other objects of worship in the Marneion by imperial agents, the Christians debated how to use the structure: some suggested that it be torn down, others that it be burned down, and yet others that the site be purified and sanctified by the erection of a church. Since they could not reach an agreement (ἢν πολλὴ περὶ τούτου ἡ σκέψις), the bishop ordered the people to fast and pray, expecting a divine revelation. In the evening a seven-year old child spelled out an oracle in Syriac: the temple must be burned down, since many crimes had been committed there, especially human sacrifices.<sup>70</sup> Porphyry wanted to build a church on the site according to a revelation that he had earlier

<sup>63</sup>Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III.52–53; cf. also 58 (Helipolis).

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Dagron, *Constantinople*, 400–401.

<sup>65</sup>Socrates, *HE*, III.2; Sozomen, *HE*, V.7. The temple was given to the Church of Alexandria by Emperor Constantius.

<sup>66</sup>PG 38, col. 99 (*Epigrammata*, 30): Εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ὅπου κατέμενε, μετασχηματισθείσαν παρ’ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ ναὸς εἰδώλων.

Αρχαία πόλις εἰμὶ δαίμοσι καμοῦσα,  
Αὐθις ἀνηγέρθην παλάμας Γρηγορίου.  
Ναὸς ἐτύχθη Χριστοῦ· δαίμονες, εἰξατέ μοι.

<sup>67</sup>O. v. Lemm, “Koptische Fragmente zur Patriarchengeschichte Alexandriens,” *Mémoires de l’Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, 7 ser., 36, 11 (1888), 40 ff, cited in H. Hellenkemper and F. Hild, *Neue Forschungen in Kilikien* (Vienna, 1986), 44–45.

<sup>68</sup>Sozomen, *HE*, VII.15.2–10. Different accounts by Socrates, *HE*, V.16; Rufinus, *HE*, XI.22.

<sup>69</sup>Sozomen, *HE*, VII.15.

<sup>70</sup>Grégoire and Kugener, *Marc le Diacre*, § 66.

when he visited Empress Eudocia in Constantinople.<sup>71</sup> Some Christians agreed with him, but others wanted to see the place abandoned. They left the decision to God. In fact, a letter from the empress contained both wishes and promises of financial support and a cruciform plan for the church that matched the actual plan of the Marneion.<sup>72</sup> The miracle convinced the Christians that they should erect their church on the site. This account contains an interesting detail: the saint ordered that slabs of marble from the most sacred part of the temple be used as pavement in the front yard of the church, so that people as well as animals would step on them.<sup>73</sup> It is possible, however, that this account reflects later interpretations, since the Life was apparently written after 534.<sup>74</sup>

In the Life and Miracles of St. Thekla, three places of pagan worship are said to have been transformed into Christian churches: the temples of Sarpedon Apollo, of Athena on the acropolis of Seleucia, and of Zeus. The exact dates remain uncertain,<sup>75</sup> which is true for most of the pagan sites transformed into churches. Unfortunately archaeology does not support the literary evidence for the early replacement of pagan sanctuaries by Christian churches. The poor preservation of early Christian architectural structures causes serious difficulties in dating this process with precision. We have seen that, according to the study of Spieser, the archaeological evidence in Greece suggests a later replacement of pagan temples by churches. Spieser concludes that this phenomenon can be explained neither by Christian hostility against the pagan cult nor as a manifestation of Christian victory; he suggests a different explanation for it: lack of available land in the cities and towns, because of the reduction of their size caused by the invasions at the end of late Antiquity.<sup>76</sup>

In other locations it was often a matter of convenience.<sup>77</sup> In Egypt the famous temple of Philae was transformed into a church in the reign of Jus-

tinian.<sup>78</sup> Archaeologists have reached similar conclusions about Christian churches erected on the sites of pagan sanctuaries in Asia Minor.<sup>79</sup> In the past scholars had recognized similarities between the pagan cult and the Christian one that replaced it at the same site, and concluded that the Church had systematically transformed pagan sanctuaries into churches. This view has long ago been refuted.<sup>80</sup>

Scanty literary evidence suggests a theological interpretation. Churches on pagan sites were considered to have purified the “polluted” places. Libanius testifies to this idea: τοὺς δὲ (νεῶς) βεβήλους ἀποφήνας πόροντος ἐνοικεῖν ἔδωκε.<sup>81</sup> According to an imperial decree of the year 435, all pagan sanctuaries in which pagan cults were still performed “shall be destroyed by the command of the magistrates, and shall be purified by the erection of the sign of the venerable Christian religion.”<sup>82</sup> Theodoret explains in this way the use of building materials from pagan temples: αἱ δὲ τούτων ὕλαι καθωσιώθησαν τοῖς τῶν μαρτύρων σηκοῖς.<sup>83</sup> Statues were often treated in a similar way: drawing the sign of the cross on the forehead of statues appears to have been a common practice.<sup>84</sup>

Hagiographical sources often mention saints moving into deserted pagan temples in the countryside for shelter. In connection with this, they describe their spiritual fights against the demons that inhabited the temples. One of the earliest cases is the establishment of St. Thekla in the temple of Sarpedon in Seleucia.<sup>85</sup> In the Life of St. Matrona (5th–6th centuries) the saint moved into

<sup>78</sup> Cf. P. Nautin, “La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne,” *CahArch* 17 (1967), 1–43, esp. 1–8.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, one of the earliest Christian churches in Cilicia, the church at Ayaş built on a pagan temple (probably of Zeus) dating from the end of the 5th century: M. Gough, “A Temple and Church at Ayaş (Cilicia),” *AS* 4 (1954), 49–64, esp. 63. For a general account of transformation of churches into temples, see O. Feld and H. Weber, “Tempel und Kirche über der korykischen Grotte (Cennet Cehennem) in Kilikien,” *IM* 17 (1967), 254–79.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. H. Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels, 1955), 151 f; A.-J. Festugière, *Sainte Thécle. Saints Côme et Damien. Saints Cyr et Jean (Extraits). Saint Georges* (Paris, 1971), 91–95. The sites on which a continuity of the pagan cult can be traced with certainty are very few: T. E. Gregory, “The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece: A Critical Essay,” *AJP* 107.2 (1986), 229–42, esp. 237 ff.

<sup>81</sup> *Or. XVII.7.*

<sup>82</sup> *CTh*, XVI.10.25

<sup>83</sup> Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, VIII.68.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Julian, *Ep.* 79 (Bidez, p. 86, lines 15–17).

<sup>85</sup> Dagron, *Thecle*, 84, 278. Cf. also his remarks in *Information de l’Histoire de l’Art* (1973), 163–67, esp. 164.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, § 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, § 75.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, § 76. On the *Vita* of Porphyry, cf. the thoughts of R. Van Dam, “From Paganism to Christianity at Late Antique Gaza,” *Viator* 16 (1985), 1–20, regarding the conflict between Christianity and paganism within a specific community.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. P. Peeters, “La vie géorgienne de Saint Porphyre de Gaza,” *AB* 59 (1941), 65–216 (I owe this information to Prof. T. D. Barnes).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. G. Dagron, *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thécle: Texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Brussels, 1978), 81 ff, 278, 290–94.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Spieser, “La christianisation,” 311.

<sup>77</sup> Dagron, *Thecle*, 83.

an already deserted temple near Beirut because she preferred to be consumed by demons rather than be found by her husband.<sup>86</sup> The temple was inhabited by idols and demons, whom she succeeded in turning away by her holy and pure conduct (ἡ πολιτεία αὐτῆς ἡ ἀγγελικὴ καὶ ἡ ἀγνεία ἡ λαμπρά).<sup>87</sup> St. Daniel the Styliste settled in a pagan temple at Anaplon near Constantinople. He heard from local people that the temple was inhabited by demons who caused all kinds of damage to the inhabitants of the area, especially shipwrecks. The saint was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and after recalling the struggles of St. Antony, the founder of monasticism, and of his pupil Paul against the demons, he entered the temple like a soldier fighting against a great number of barbarians. Three days later he succeeded in driving them away, and remained in the temple for nine years.<sup>88</sup> Other sources testify to an early settling of deserted pagan temples by hermits.<sup>89</sup> The saints consolidated their positions at such sites by performing miracles. The moral was clear: the Christian religion was superior.<sup>90</sup> These sources also imply that there were practical considerations in choosing a former pagan sanctuary as an abode: they provided a convenient retreat.

At the end of the period under investigation, symbolic interpretations of the settlement of saints at pagan sites are attested. For example, in the older version of the Life of St. Alypius the Styliste, at the time of Heraclius, the saint settled in an ancient pagan cemetery in a deserted area outside Adrianopolis in Paphlagonia. In spite of the presence of demons, he decided to stay there. A funeral monument representing a mythical animal (*tauroleon*) on a column was particularly appealing to him. He spoke to the statue with affection (ἥδεο καὶ προσηνῆ διαλεγόμενος) and embraced it: "I greet you, very precious to me; worthless, you have been assigned for use as a funeral monument by those who built it; I welcome you, because being a cornerstone you are appropriate for me; you have been made such a cornerstone by God and are marvelous to look at. I greet you, stone, in Christ,

<sup>86</sup> *ActaSS*, Nov. III, p. 798A.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 798B–799F. Cf. also Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, III.101–2.

<sup>88</sup> *Sancti Danielis Stylitae Vita antiquior*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites*, SubsHag 14 (Brussels-Paris, 1923), § 14–18 (pp. 14–18; cf. also p. 96, lines 6–10; pp. 109, line 15–112, line 24).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. D. J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford, 1966), 8, 34, 69.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 26 f.

because Christ himself, the unshaken power, is called 'true' stone, on which I wish to support my feet. I have chosen this place as a residence in eternal rest."<sup>91</sup> Symeon Metaphrastes, in a later variation of the Life, gives a slightly different interpretation of the saint's preference for the tombstone: it was suitable to his needs since he was preparing himself for voluntary death.<sup>92</sup> The end of the story is equally interesting: the saint brought from the city an icon of Christ, a cross, and a lever; he demolished the monument and replaced it with the cross and the icon, so that the enemy army of the demons would be an object of ridicule (γελῶτο καὶ πατῶτο). Then, following a vision, he built on the site a church dedicated to St. Euphemia.

It is difficult to trace the attitude of the uneducated Christians because the sources that are produced by and express the feelings of the lower classes are intended for a certain milieu, that of the monks who in their religious zeal promoted a complete detachment from the pagan tradition. Generally it was believed that pagan temples and statues were inhabited by demons.

In late Antiquity both pagans and Christians believed in the existence of demons (*daimones*), minor gods whose power was ambivalent. Pagans considered them their companions and protectors, but their power could sometimes be destructive.<sup>93</sup> For Christians the demons had an evil nature; they were dangerous enemies and could cause illusions.<sup>94</sup> Pagan and Christian literature of late An-

<sup>91</sup> *Sancti Alypiii Stylitae Vita Prior*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites*, p. 154, lines 8–16.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176, lines 26–29. Cf. a similar treatment of the subject by Theophanes Kerameus (12th century), in a homily on Pancratius, bishop of Tauromenium (PG 132, col. 1001B–C). According to the ancient *Vita*, the saint had destroyed the idols of the city (*ActaSS*, April I, p. 240D, §5), while Kerameus changes the account into a metaphor and speaks about the "idols of the spirit."

<sup>93</sup> Cf. E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety; Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge, 1965), 37f; MacMullen, *Paganism*, 79 f; Fox, *Pagans* (above, note 14) 129, 132, 327–30.

<sup>94</sup> Cf., for example, St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom, in J. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum* (Venice, 1730), 578–84; *Apophthegmata patrum*, PG 65, col. 77: Φαντασίαι . . . εἰ ἀληθιναὶ εἰσὶν η ὑπὸ δαιμόνων. For the Christian belief in demons, see MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 26 f; Fox, *Pagans*, 137, 327–30. For a later period, see Michael Psellus, *De Operatione Daemonum: Accedunt inedita opuscula Pselli*, ed. J. F. Boissonade (Amsterdam, 1964); D. A. Miller, *Imperial Constantinople* (New York, 1969), 152–58; C. Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (New York, 1980), 159–65; R. P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam, 1988); idem, "Some Late Byzantine Theories about the Materiality of Demons," *BSCAbstr* 12 (1986), 52. For the demons in Byzantine hagiography of the early centuries as a *topos* ("le modèle démoniaque"), see E. Patlagean, "Ancienne hagiographie byzantine et histoire

tiquity is replete with references to the supernatural power of the demons. And, most important for our purpose, the lower classes and uneducated people as well as the intellectuals believed in them. Libanius explains epidemics and riots by the actions of πονηροὶ δαίμονες.<sup>95</sup> St. Augustine is a case in point.<sup>96</sup> In the hagiographical sources, one of the most remarkable activities of the saints was to expel demons from pagan temples. In the Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, a pagan priest called demons into a temple with the usual rite (τὴν συνήθη προσάγοντος θεοπετεῖαν), but St. Gregory cast them out by spelling Christ's name. The pagan priest tried in vain to call the demons back; the saint, in order to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian religion, was alone able to do so.<sup>97</sup>

In some instances, descriptions of these incidents are enriched with revealing details. After the destruction of the Serapeum, the temples of Canopus were transformed into a monastery. The first monks who settled there were invited by Bishop Theophilus from Jerusalem, but they were unable to handle the demonic illusions. Native monks were then called in because it was believed they had the expertise to neutralize the local demons.<sup>98</sup> A hermit of the fourth century, Macarius, settled in a deserted temple. At night, using a mummy for a pillow, he became the target of demons, who called him by a woman's name. A demon of the pagan mummy took part in this game. But the hermit did not give up. He beat the mummy and turned the demons away.<sup>99</sup> In the Life of St. Daniel the Styliste, demons attacked him with stones for two days, while they tried to intimidate him with clamor and sounds. The third day they created illusions (φαντασίαι) and threatened him with swords. Then the saint expelled them with prayers, and they flew before his face in the form of bats.<sup>100</sup> One should note that the idea of expelling demons from a place in order to establish a new

sociale," *Annales ESC* 23.1 (1968), 112–16; J. Chryssavgis, "The Monk and the Demon: A Study of Demonology in Early Medieval Literature," *Nicolaus* 13 (1986), 265–79.

<sup>95</sup> *Or. XIX.5*, 29. Cf. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 15 and 21*, PG 49, cols. 154, 214 f.

<sup>96</sup> P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, a Biography* (New York, 1986), 311. Cf. also John Chrysostom, *Hom. 28 in Matthaeum*, PG 57, col. 353.

<sup>97</sup> *Vita S. Greg. Thaumat.*, PG 46, cols. 916A–917A; cf. MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 59–61.

<sup>98</sup> Chitty, *Desert*, 54–55. Cf. also L. Keimer, "L'horreur des Egyptiens pour les démons du désert," *BIFAO* 46 (1947), 135–47.

<sup>99</sup> *Apophthegmata patrum*, PG 65, col. 268D.

<sup>100</sup> H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites*, 14–18.

cult there is an old one. For example, according to tradition, the first colonists of Byzantium expelled the local demons with sacrifices.<sup>101</sup>

Statues were also inhabited by demons. I would emphasize here that already in ancient Greece we find evidence of an animistic concept of statues.<sup>102</sup> In late Antiquity various sources, both pagan and Christian, testify to the general conviction that statues were animated. St. Augustine, in his *Epistula 102.3*, offers an interesting description: "Does anyone imagine that idols have any sense of perception? Yet, when they are set in lofty shrines to be honoured, and are waited on by those who pray and offer victims, dumb and lifeless as they are, they give the illusion of moving and feeling, and greatly increase the veneration of the crowd, on which their cult so greatly depends."<sup>103</sup> This conviction was shared by both uneducated and educated people. Eunapius mentions a story told to Emperor Julian regarding such a miracle: the philosopher Maximus, in the presence of several of his colleagues, performed a religious rite so that the statue of the goddess smiled and then laughed, and the candles that she held in her hands were lit up.<sup>104</sup> For the Christians, of course, the demons inhabiting pagan statues were malevolent.<sup>105</sup> But the pagans of late Antiquity considered statues to be a kind of talisman because of the power of the spirits that resided in them.<sup>106</sup>

### III

Superstition, however, prevailed in the long run. It has been shown that in later Byzantine periods pagan statues were accorded magical powers, and

<sup>101</sup> *Patria Constantinoupolenos, Scriptores Originum Constantino-politanarum*, ed. T. Preger (Leipzig, 1851), 4 (p. 2, line 12).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience*, 2nd ed. (London, 1961), 159.

<sup>103</sup> Trans. W. Parsons, *The Fathers of the Church* 18 (Washington, D.C., 1953). Cf. also Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III.57; Theodoret, *HE*, V.22; Sozomen, *HE*, VII.15; Porphyry, *Vie de Porphyre le philosophe néoplatonicien*, ed. J. Bidez (Leipzig, 1913), § 1 (p. 1, lines 6–10). Cf. also Fox, *Pagans*, 135–37.

<sup>104</sup> Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, VII.2.9–10: ὥστε τὸ πρῶτον ἐμειδα τὸ ἄγαλμα, εἴτε καὶ γέλως ἢν τὸ φαινόμενον . . . καὶ τοὺς λόγους ἔφθανεν τὸ φῶς ταῖς λαμπτάσι περιφλεγόμενον.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Grégoire et Kugener, *Marc le Diaire*, § 61: the demon of the statue of Aphrodite, once a cross had been presented, came out of the statue, breaking it into pieces. Cf. also the prayer of St. Gregory the Thaumaturgus: the demons are everywhere in nature, on the mountains, in caves, rivers, etc., and in altars, in baths, at crossroads, etc.: A. Strittmatter, "Ein griechisches Exorzismusbüchlein, Ms. Car. c 143b der Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, II," *OrChr* 26.2 (1932), 127–44 (esp. p. 129, line 12).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. H. Mattingly, "The Later Paganism," *HTR* 35 (1942), 178.

were believed capable of causing calamities and disasters.<sup>107</sup> The evidence of the sources mentioned above, however, suggests that this was not a medieval interpretation, "a new 'folkloristic' significance" of the pagan monuments,<sup>108</sup> but rather a continuation of a concept rooted in the pagan religious beliefs of late Antiquity. The continuation into medieval times of such pagan beliefs in connection with the monuments is also attested in some Christian sources from the end of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the seventh century, for example, Anastasius Sinaites mentions that "the *telesmata histamena* of the magician Apollonius were still practiced, some for fending off animals and birds that could do harm, others for diverting the stream of rivers flowing irregularly, while others were regarded as capable of averting (*apotropaia*) destruction and harm to men."<sup>109</sup> G. Dagron has shown that statues attributed to Apollonius are mentioned in many later Byzantine sources, and he notes the "débordement de l'Antiquité sur le Christianisme."<sup>110</sup> One should note, however, that not all Byzantines believed in the magical power of the statues of Apollonius. Choniates describes a bronze eagle in the Hippodrome that was believed to have served the rites of

<sup>107</sup>Cf. Ph. Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός, I, 2 (Athens, 1948), 237–39; Mango, "Statuary," 56 f. Cf. also Fox, *Pagans*, 673–74, who also suggests a complete detachment of Christians from classical monuments already at the time of Constantine: "to neutralize them, Christianity had to divert attention to elsewhere and to leave them as 'demonic' survivals beside its own new centres of religion." Miller, *Constantinople*, 158–62, believes that "the natural inclination of the Byzantines was to transfer their suspicion of the insubstantial world of the demonic to the frozen substance of the statues . . ." (p. 159). Cf. also Averil Cameron and J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), 31–34 (on the *Patria*, cf. A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinopoleos* [Bonn, 1988]; on the date of the *Parastaseis*, cf. A. Kazhdan, *BZ* 80 [1987], 402).

<sup>108</sup>Cf. Mango, "Statuary," 59 f. 63.

<sup>109</sup>PG 89, col. 525B. On Apollonius of Tyana, cf. W. Speyer, "Zum Bild des Apollonios von Tyana bei Heiden und Christen," *JbAC* 17 (1974), 47–63 (for the meaning of the word *telesma* and its use in other texts, cf. *ibid.*, 56ff); E. L. Bowie, "Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 11, 16, 2 (Berlin, 1978), 1652–99; C. P. Jones, "An Epigram on Apollonius of Tyana," *JHS* 100 (1980), 190–94; Dagron, *Constantinople* (above, note 5), 103–25. Cf. also the poem of Johannes Tzetzes, ed. P. A. Leone (Naples, 1968), II, verses 928–81 (pp. 80–82), where he praises his wisdom and his power. (For a general account of pagan survivals from the middle of the 6th century from other sources, cf. F. R. Trombley, *The Survival of Paganism in the Byzantine Empire during the Pre-iconoclastic Period*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1981; idem, "Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Anatolia and Greece," *HTR* 78, 3–4 [1985], 327–52).

<sup>110</sup>Cf. Dagron, *Constantinople*, 104 f.

Apollonius; it was brought to Constantinople in order to save the city from snakes. His description, however, does not imply that he believed in the magic powers of the statue: "it was a new craft, a magnificent and meretricious product of his witchcraft . . . , using filthy lewdness, which had guided demons and all those who believe in his secret rites."<sup>111</sup>

Although such sources express the attitudes of the common people, at about the same time the attitudes of the educated toward pagan monuments appear to be more complex than is usually believed. The break with classical tradition by the end of the sixth century is a well-documented phenomenon. The institutions of the ancient cities had by that time disappeared.<sup>112</sup> Education and literature had become Christian. The empire had become a wholly Christian one; the seventh and eighth centuries, the Byzantine "dark ages," are thus characterized. We no longer hear of collections of statues.<sup>113</sup> Generally the literary evidence conveys the impression that pagan monuments were repudiated or that they were nothing more than objects inhabited by demons and spirits.<sup>114</sup> To our surprise, there is archaeological evidence which suggests that sometimes they meant more than that to educated Byzantines. In the recently excavated church of St. Stephen at Um er-Rasas in Palestine, pagan monuments had been deliberately included in the decoration of its floor, which consisted of mosaics depicting buildings representative of certain cities. In one of them, a pagan temple (identified as that of Zeus Hypsistos) was chosen as best representing the city of Neapolis, the see of a bishop of Palestina Prima. A temple of

<sup>111</sup>*Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. A. van Dieten, I (Berlin, 1975): καὶνὸν μεθόδευμα καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου γοητείας μεγαλοπρεπὲς μαγγάνευμα . . . ταῖς ἀρρητουργίαις χροσάμενος, ὃν ὑφῆγηται δαίμονες καὶ ὅσοι τὰ τούτων πρεσβεύονται δογια (p. 651, lines 33–34, 35–37). Cf. also A. Cutler, "The *De Signis* of Nicetas Choniates: A Reappraisal," *AJA* 72 (1968), 113–18; E. Mathiopulu-Tornaritou, "Klassisches und Klassizistisches im Statuenfragment von Niketas Choniates," *BZ* 73 (1980), 25–40. For a different view, see Mango, "Statuary," 68.

<sup>112</sup>Cf. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Demise" (above, note 42), 365–401.

<sup>113</sup>It has been stated that there are no collections of antiquities after the 5th century A.D. (Mango, "Statuary," 70). One should mention that in the 6th century Justinian ordered Narses to destroy pagan temples in Egypt and to send their statues to Constantinople (above, note 46). Cf. also Dagron, *Constantinople*, 144. For a later period, see the remarks of Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, 46, and A. Cutler, "The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice," *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), 235–54, esp. 254.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. Mango, "Statuary," 59 f.

Pan stood for an Egyptian site.<sup>115</sup> Inscriptions in the church date from the years 756 and 785.

The *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* and the *Patria Constantinoupoloios* offer valuable information for our investigation. Ph. Koukoules and C. Mango have shown that superstitious beliefs regarding pagan monuments were prevalent: it was believed that statues were inhabited by demons and were to be avoided because they could harm people. Sometimes the statues were destroyed as the result of such superstitious beliefs.<sup>116</sup> We find similar attitudes toward ancient monuments in the eighth-century commentaries of Cosmas of Jerusalem on the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>117</sup> Such attitudes were held by uneducated and educated Byzantines alike.<sup>118</sup> In this respect again, in Byzantium of the eighth and ninth centuries, things did not change much from late Antiquity. Ancient monuments, both statues and buildings, were objects of superstitious beliefs, while at the same time they were admired for their artistic value. For example, George Cedrenus praises the statue of Apollo at Daphne in Antioch (ἥν γὰρ ἔκεισε θαυμαστὸν ἔργον Βούξιδος ἀγαλματοποιοῦ, δικῆς ἀλλος ἵσχυσεν ἐκμιμήσασθαι).<sup>119</sup>

However, we notice the distance that separates the Byzantines from the original meaning of the pagan statues, when we read that they wrongly identified them with Byzantine emperors or other Christian figures.<sup>120</sup> Arbitrary interpretations of representations of pagan gods and heroes might equally be considered as suggesting ignorance of classical mythology. For example, according to the *Patria*, Athene is represented with a helmet because her wisdom is invisible, and with an olive branch ὡς καθαρωτάτης αὐτῆς οὐσίας οὐσηφωτὸς γὰρ ὑλη ἡ ἐλαία. The Gorgon is represented on her chest to designate the ταχὺ τοῦ νοός.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>115</sup> M. Piccirillo, "Le iscrizioni di Um er-Rasas—Kastron Mefaa in Giordania I (1986–1987)," *Liber Annus* 37 (1987), 199 (no. 30), 202 (no. 38).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος*, I, 2, 237–39; Mango, "Statuary," 61–62.

<sup>117</sup> PG 28, cols. 341–670; cf. Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, 31–32.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. ibid., 32. For a contrary view, see Mango, "Statuary," 59 ff.

<sup>119</sup> Cedrenus, Bonn ed., I, p. 536, lines 100–12.

<sup>120</sup> *Parastaseis*, § 61 (p. 138, lines 13–17) = *Patria*, II, § 78 (p. 190, line 19–p. 191, line 3); *Parastaseis*, § 68 (p. 150, lines 1–6); *Patria*, II, § 47 (p. 176, lines 7–10), § 87 (p. 196, lines 3–6).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., § 3. Cf. also § 4, 5, 6 etc.; § 45: Καὶ δι περιβλεπτος οὐτος κινω καὶ ἡ στήλη τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, δικην Ἡλιον ἔστησεν αὐτήν δι μέγας Κωνσταντίνος εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, θήσας, ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἥλους ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ δικην ἀκτενών, ὡς Ἡλιος τοῖς πολέταις ἐκλάμπων. (Cf. Cameron and Herrin, *Constanti-*

Such interpretations do not, however, suggest detachment from and ignorance of the classical tradition: the Byzantines simply followed a certain literary tradition from late Antiquity. In the Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων of Porphyry, for example, we find similar interpretations of ancient statues.

The *Parastaseis* and the *Patria* allow us to make three other observations regarding the position of classical monuments in Byzantium. (1) Subjects of superstition were not only pagan statues, but also Christian ones. For example, Zenon, looking at a statue of Valentinian, stated that Caesars who were not represented in statues were not lucky.<sup>122</sup> (2) Ancient statues were displayed in public places not only because they were considered a kind of talisman with apotropaic powers, but also because they were objects of admiration; they were erected εἰς θέαν, εἰς θέαμα, θέας χάριν, etc.<sup>123</sup> We understand, therefore, why in our source θαυμάτιον means εἰδωλεῖον.<sup>124</sup> (3) The *Patria* explicitly mentions artistic considerations for some pagan monuments. Constantine, for example, displayed all the statues transported from various temples and cities for the decoration of Constantinople (εἰς διακόσμησιν τῆς πόλεως).<sup>125</sup>

In later centuries we often hear of pagan monuments in the works of *literati*. Several sources testify that interest in classical monuments never disappeared in Byzantium. A few texts have been selected which best illustrate this attitude. In a letter of Emperor Theodore II Lascaris, the ancient city of Pergamum is contrasted to the poverty of the contemporary city. The emperor praises the glory and prosperity of the ancient city, the ingenuity that produced its magnificent buildings, the wisdom that they express; he admires the beauty (ώραιότερα) of the ancient monuments. The houses of its contemporary inhabitants appear like mouse holes (μυῶν τρῶγλαι).<sup>126</sup> It has been sug-

*nople*, 216–17; R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals* [Berkeley, 1983], 62 ff. For a different interpretation of ancient statues, see Theodore, *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, VII.7: they were intended to instruct uneducated pagans.)

<sup>122</sup> *Parastaseis*, § 51; cf. also § 74 (*Patria*, II, § 34); *Patria*, II, § 29; III, § 37 (p. 230, lines 23–24), 200.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. *Parastaseis*, § 13 (p. 76, lines 2–3), 37 (p. 98, lines 13, 15, p. 100, line 11), 39 (p. 104, line 3), 50, 57 (τὰ εἰδωλα συγχλάσας [Κωνσταντίνος] εἰς μέρος αὐτουργικὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ μαρμάρων εἰς θέαν ἔσαν: pp. 132–34), etc.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., § 41 (p. 110, line 19). For other terms used to designate statues, cf. Cameron and Herrin, *Constantinople*, 33.

<sup>125</sup> *Patria*, I, § 62 (p. 145, line 20); cf. also § 68 (p. 149, line 2).

<sup>126</sup> *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*, ed. N. Festa (Florence, 1898), 107–8: Ἐλληνικῆς γάρ μεγαλονοίας ὑπάρχει ταῦτα

gested that this description of ancient Pergamum was the result of a new interest in Antiquity in the Palaiologan Renaissance.<sup>127</sup> Surprisingly, we find a similar attitude toward classical monuments in a text of the tenth century, which has escaped the attention of scholars. Theodore, bishop of Kyzikos, in a letter addressed to Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, describes the vestiges of ancient Kyzikos in words similar to those of Theodore II: “the houses were destroyed, the walls were collapsed; there were many ruins and great columns, overturned remains of *stelai* and tombs, as well as pieces of broken inscriptions; on account of their letters, there are faint vestiges of ancient prosperity; their size is remarkable.” The bishop contrasts this picture of ancient glory and prosperity with the contemporary inhabitants of the site who were not educated and who did not have the virtue (*ἀρετή*) of the Ancients. They could only claim that they were their descendants.<sup>128</sup>

In the eleventh century, on the occasion of the collapse of the temple of Kyzikos caused by an earthquake, Michael Attaliates expresses his admiration for its solid construction, its beautiful stones, the superb harmony of its parts, its size, and its good preservation.<sup>129</sup> Maximus Planoudes later visited the temple and complained that there was no one around who could show him its underground structure.<sup>130</sup> The monuments of Athens are praised by Michael Akominatos.<sup>131</sup> The *De signis* of Nicetas Choniates expresses the same ideas. Manuel Chrysoloras, in a letter addressed to De-

μεστά, καὶ σοφίας ταύτης ἴνδαλματα . . . Σμερδαλέα γάρ εἰσι ταῦτα πρὸς τὰς νῦν ἀνοικοδομάς . . . Μέσων δὲ τῶν οἰκοδομῶν κελλιόρια χθανατά καὶ οἴνων λείφανα τῶν τεθνεάτων οἴκων ἐμφαίνονται, πολλὴν ἐμποιούντα τῇ θέᾳ τὴν ἀλληγόρων. ‘Ως γάρ εἰς τοὺς νῦν οἴκους αἱ τῶν μυῶν ἔχουσι τρῶγλαι, οὐτως ἀν εἴποι τις καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς τοὺς ἀφανίζομένους.

<sup>127</sup>Cf. Mango, “Statuary,” 69.

<sup>128</sup>S. Lampros, Τὰ ἑρεύπια τῆς ἀρχαίας Κυζίκου τὸν δέκατον αἰῶνα, Νέος Εἳλ. 13 (1916), 130; idem, Βιενναίου κώδικος Phil. Gr. 342 Θεοδώρου μητροπολίτου Κυζίκου, *ibid.*, 19 (1925), p. 270, lines 1–8. Cf. also J. F. Boissonade, *Anecdota graeca e codicibus regiis V* (Paris, 1833), 373–75: Στέχοι τού σοφιστάτου μητροπολίτου Ἀθηνῶν κυροῦ Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Χωνιάτου ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχετύπῳ ἀνιστορήσει αὐτῶν, τούτεστι τῆς πόλεως τῶν Ἀθηνῶν.

<sup>129</sup>*Historia*, Bonn ed., p. 90, lines 5–8: . . . μέγιστον δὲ χρῆμα πρὸς θέαν δι’ ὀχυρότητα καὶ λίθου τοῦ καλλίστου τε καὶ μεγίστου τεχνικωτάτην ἀρμονίαν τε καὶ ἀνοικοδομήν καὶ ὑψους καὶ μεγέθους διάρκειαν.

<sup>130</sup>C. Wendel, “Planudea,” *BZ* 40 (1940), 433: . . . καὶ ναὸς πάλαι τιμώμενός τε καὶ θαυμαζόμενος . . . τὸ γάρ, ἥνκα πρὸς τὸν ἐν Κυζίκῳ νεῶν ἥμεν, μηδένα ἥμιν ἐπιστήσαι, δις ἀν καὶ τὰ ὑπ’ ἐκείνον ἐδείκνυ ποταμούς τε φερομένους δι’ ὑπονόμου καὶ ἔτερον ἄττα κρυπτόμενα θαύματα. . . .

<sup>131</sup>S. Lampros, Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα (Athens, 1879), I, 93 ff, 316 ff; II, 12, 17 etc.

metrius Chrysoloras, explains how his admiration for classical monuments must be understood: he does not admire the beauty of the bodies but that of the creative mind who produced them (“Οτι οὐ σωμάτων κάλλη θαυμάζομεν ἐν τούτοις, ἀλλὰ νοῦ κάλλος τοῦ πεποιηκότος”).<sup>132</sup>

It has been shown that collections of pagan statues (which would certainly testify to their artistic appreciation by educated Byzantines) are not mentioned in late Byzantine sources.<sup>133</sup> However, the physical proximity of the Byzantines to pagan monuments is attested in many texts in all periods of their history. In addition to the sources mentioned above, the following texts deserve our attention. In the Life of Patriarch Eutychius (d. 582), a mosaic of Aphrodite in a private house was destroyed only when the owner decided to transform it into a monastery.<sup>134</sup> According to the Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon, in a village a marble sarcophagus that contained the remains of ἀρχούσιων ἀνθρώπων Ἐλλήνων had been used by the villagers as a water fountain. But they needed the saint’s intervention to eliminate the demon who was the guardian of the deceased. The hagiographer explains that the saint allowed the use of the pagan sarcophagus ὡς χρήσιμον δὲ εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὑδρίου ὑπουργίαν.<sup>135</sup> In the eleventh century Psellus tried to read and interpret an ancient inscription.<sup>136</sup> Manuel Chrysoloras read ancient Greek inscriptions in Rome; his archaeological interest was clearly motivated by “national pride.”<sup>137</sup> John Eu-  
genicus, in an *ekphrasis komes*, mentions the vestiges of a so-called *palaia kome* located not far from the

<sup>132</sup>PG 156, col. 57D. Chrysoloras says that he was looking for ancient stones and statues (*ibid.*, 57A): Νῦν δὲ ώμογέρων ἥδη γεννέων, οὐν οἴδ’ ὅπως εἰς τοῦτο ἔξηγενέχθην. Αἰνιγμά σοι δοκῶ λέγειν· ἄκουε δὲ τὴν λύσιν τοῦ αἰνίγματος καὶ τῆς ἀπορίας· ἐγὼ γάρ οὐ ζωντων σωμάτων κάλλη ἐν ἐκείνοις ζητῶν τοῦτο ποιῶ, ἀλλὰ λίθων, καὶ μαρμάρων, καὶ διμοιμάτων.

<sup>133</sup>Mango, “Statuary,” 70; idem, “Epigrammes honorifiques, statues et portraits à Byzance,” *Aphérodouma sto Níko Σβορώνο, I* (Rethymno, 1986), 23–35, esp. 34 and note 2. Cf. also *ibid.*, “Anthologia Palatina 9.686,” *CQ*, n.s. 34 (1984), 490, and the remarks of B. Baldwin, “Anthologia Palatina 9. 686,” *BZ* 79 (1986), 263.

<sup>134</sup>*ActaSS*, April I, p. 311, § 54.

<sup>135</sup>A.-J. Festugiére, *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon* (Brussels, 1970), pp. 94–95, § 118.

<sup>136</sup>Michaelis Pselli Scripta Minora, ed. E. Kurtz (Milan, 1941), 2, § 188. Cf. also G. Dagron, “Psello’s épigraphiste,” in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies 7 = Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on His Sixtieth Birthday . . .* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 117–23.

<sup>137</sup>PG 156, col. 56C–D: Α πᾶς τις ἀν βεβαίως ἀπὸ τῶν γραφομένων εἴποι ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ὀλλῆς Ἐλλάδος δεῦρο κεκομισθαι· καὶ ὅλλα δὲ μυρία εὐρίσκω ἐνταῦθα Ἐλληνικῶς γραφέντα καὶ τυπωθέντα, οἶλον ἐφ’ ἐνδε τάφου μετὰ πολλὰ Λατινικῶς τετυπωμένα· ἔτι προσκείμενον Ἐλληνιστὶ τούτι τὸ ἔπος. Εὐψύχει, Πρισκιανέ, οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος.

Byzantine site that he describes. One could see there “vestiges of a wall, towers, a theater, ancient buildings and statues.”<sup>138</sup> The familiarity with forms of ancient art is manifested not only in classicized forms of Byzantine art objects but also in literature. Emperor Zeno the Isaurian, for example, is compared with Pan: ἦν γὰρ ὁ Ζήνων τῆς κακίστης καὶ εἰδεχθοῦς γενεᾶς τῶν Ἰσαύρων, δασύς τε καὶ εἰδεχθέστατος, ὥσπερ Ἐλληνες ζωγραφοῦσι τὸν Πάνα τραγοσκελῆ καὶ δασύκνημον, τὴν χροιὰν μέλας, τὴν ἥλικιαν ἀσύμβλητος, ὁργίλος, μνησίκακος καὶ φθόνου μεστός.<sup>139</sup>

It appears from these examples that Christian attitudes of late Antiquity toward pagan monuments were transmitted to the Byzantines of later centuries, the only difference being that some attitudes have been emphasized at different periods. The conclusion of Herbert Hunger regarding Byzantine literature may also be applied to Byzantine attitudes toward pagan monuments: “The Byzantines felt closer to Christianity and late Antiquity (5th and 6th centuries) than to pagan Antiquity.”<sup>140</sup>

We may thus discern various attitudes toward classical monuments in late Antiquity. Some were destroyed as a result of religious intolerance, while others were re-used by Christians for practical purposes or for their artistic value. Was this ambiguity the result of a confusion that one would naturally expect in a period of transition? I believe a similar phenomenon in Christian literature offers the explanation. Despite the various warnings of the dangers of pagan literature for Christians and suggestions for a radical departure from classical tradition and education, Christian authors never ceased studying classical texts and using them as examples to be imitated. The phenomenon is well known and has often been discussed.<sup>141</sup> My intention here is merely to draw attention to the similarities between the Christian attitude toward pagan literature and that toward classical monuments. This intimate relationship between pagan literature and pagan religion was also stressed by the pagans. Libanius, for example, in his *Oratio XIII.1*,

<sup>138</sup> S. Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά, I (Athens, 1912–23), 51: καὶ τείχους ἵχνη καὶ πύργων καὶ θεάτρου καὶ οἰκημάτων ὀρχαιοτάτων καὶ ὄγαλμάτων λεύφανα.

<sup>139</sup> Cedrenus, Bonn ed., I, p. 615, lines 13–17.

<sup>140</sup> H. Hunger, “The Reconstruction and Conception of the Past in Literature,” *17th International Byzantine Congress*, 519.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. above, note 8.

writes: “In company with the worship of the gods, Sire, there has also returned reverence for the practice of eloquence, not merely because eloquence is perhaps no small part of such worship, but also because you have been inspired toward reverence for the gods by eloquence itself.”

In concluding, I would venture to suggest another explanation for this ambiguous attitude toward classical monuments, especially the re-use of temples by Christians: the Christian concept of the sacred was simply a very different one from that of the pagans.<sup>142</sup> The problem is related to extremely difficult questions of religious belief and practice. I must limit myself at this point to only a few manifestations of it. It is known that building materials from sacred places were used in pagan Antiquity for the construction of, for instance, city walls, in cases of emergency. The literary evidence does not suggest a similar treatment of Christian religious buildings.<sup>143</sup> Reactions of pagans and Christians to sacred places during periods of crisis offer an interesting insight into their religious beliefs. Thucydides, for example, describes the sacrileges of the Athenians during the plague: in their desperation, they neglected the ἱερὰ καὶ ὄσια, the funerary customs, and generally they committed illegal and immoral acts (ἐπὶ πλέον ἀνομίας).<sup>144</sup> Similar reactions of the Romans in periods of plague and war are offered by Livy.<sup>145</sup> By contrast, according to Procopius, the plague of 541–2 impelled the Christians to excessive displays of religiosity and obedience to the law.<sup>146</sup>

In order to illustrate the pagan attitude toward “the sacred” in late Antiquity, a few examples must suffice. Archaeological evidence suggests that as early as the first century A.D. the cult of the Heraion of Samos had declined and that in the sanctuary itself a private house was built.<sup>147</sup> Later in the fourth century, Libanius in his *Pro templis* recom-

<sup>142</sup> Cf., from a different point of view, F. W. Deichmann, “Vom Tempel zur Kirche,” *Mullus: Festschrift Theodor Klauser = JbAC* 1 (1964), 52–59; P. C. Finley, “Topos hieros und christlicher Sakralbau in vorkonstantinischer Überlieferung,” *Boreas* 7 (1984), 193–225.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. a rare case of a church that had been included in the imperial palace by Emperor Tiberius, recorded in the *Parastasis*, §2 = *Patria*, § 107.

<sup>144</sup> Thucydides, II.52–53.

<sup>145</sup> Livy, IV.XXX.9–11; XXV.I.6–12.

<sup>146</sup> Procopius, *Pers.*, XXIII.12 f.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Spieser, “La christianisation,” 318. In the 3rd century imperial legislation forbade sales of sacred places: *CI*, IX.19.1 (a. 241). For a parallel in the Christian legislation, cf. *Nov. Just.*, 120.7.1, which forbade the sale of monasteries in order to be

mends re-using pagan temples to house the municipal administration: “They are at least buildings, even though not used as temples. Taxation, presumably, required offices of collection: so let the temple stand and be the collection office, and keep it from demolition.”<sup>148</sup> He himself could have established his school in a temple in 354.<sup>149</sup> The temple of Fortuna in Antioch was also used by professors of rhetoric for their courses, and was a

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transformed into private residences. For a definition of the *sacrum locum* in imperial legislation, cf. *Dig.* I.8.6.3 (Marcian), 9 (Ulpian)=*Basilica*, 46.3.5 and 7 (scholion 1); *Dig.* XVIII.1.73 (Papinian)=*Basilica*, 19.1.73; *Photius*, *Nomokanon*, Rhallis and Potis, I, 89–92, and his interpretation of sales of monasteries in the middle Byzantine period: 91–92.

<sup>148</sup> *Or.* XXX.42.

<sup>149</sup> *Or.* I.102.

meeting place for merchants in the time of Julian. It was no longer a “sacred” place.<sup>150</sup> In the fifth century Zosimus describes how the Romans destroyed the most sacred of their statues during the siege of Rome by Alaric.<sup>151</sup> Although the act certainly had a political significance, it no doubt reveals a concept of the sacred quite different from that of the Christians.

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. L. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IVe siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 1955), 197 note 7, who concludes that the temple had already been used as a basilica.

<sup>151</sup> *Zosimus*, V.41.6–7. Sacrileges in periods of Christian religious conflicts, such as iconoclasm, constitute distinct cases and should be studied separately.